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# Playing to Your Strengths: Re-Energizing Yourself and Your Career in 2011

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## Playing to Your Strengths: Re-Energizing Yourself and Your Career in 2011

*By Marcie Areias, Career Advisor, Golden Gate University School of Law*

With the holiday cheer now over, it is not uncommon to feel a little down this time of year. However, there is something you can do to re-engage yourself at work and build the confidence you need to serve your clients successfully: develop your strengths. Whether you work in the public or private sector, are a managing partner or entry-level associate, your contributions are integral to the success of your office. Building upon the strengths you and your colleagues possess will lead to effective team building and ultimately better client service.

### Identifying Strengths

Tom Rath and a team of scientists at Gallup have taken the mystery out of identifying and defining strengths in the book *Strengths Finder 2.0*. With the underlying premise that people are more productive when focused on building their strengths and not compensating for deficiencies, *Strengths Finder* sets forth 34 talent themes and identifies your top five with a 30-minute online test. The book also provides comprehensive strength descriptions and ideas for action.

### Discussing Strengths

A big part of practicing law involves working with others. Whether you are on a deal team or leading a substantive training, attorneys constantly collaborate and share complex information; therefore, it is important to be aware of your talents and those of your colleagues. Once the *Strengths Finder* test is complete, it is important to share the findings in a small discussion group. At your next attorney lunch or retreat, break out (perhaps by practice area or existing teams) and discuss the *Strengths Finder* results. This exercise will serve the dual purpose of reaffirming each individual's talents, as well as developing an understanding and appreciation of each member's working style. For example, if James is a great communicator and Martha has strong organization and executing skills, their collaboration will produce high quality work product in both execution and delivery.

### Developing Strengths

It is important to have a plan that fosters the growth and development of identified strengths. From a management perspective, showing that the firm values and acknowledges attorney strengths will not only increase efficiency, but it will also build morale. Remember that people thrive on appreciation and talent recognition. Identifying, discussing, and developing strengths is a great way to begin 2011.

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